

## KENTUCKY

### Working Together to Fight Kentucky's Number Two Cancer Killer: Colon Cancer

Kentucky has the second highest rate of death from colon cancer in the nation. Some 2,500 Kentuckians are diagnosed with the disease each year, and more than 800 die from it (Kentucky Cancer Registry, 2001–2005).

The good news: colon cancer screening can prevent the disease or detect it at an earlier more treatable stage, and screening rates in Kentucky are rising dramatically. In 1997, Kentucky ranked 49th among the states for the percentage of Kentuckians aged 50 years and old receiving regular colon cancer screening, according to the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), at 34.2%. In 2008, we ranked 23rd at 63.7%.

Kentucky's success in addressing colon cancer has been tremendous, Kentucky Cancer Program (KCP) Co-Director Debra Armstrong said, "Our efforts to eradicate this disease contain all the pieces of model comprehensive cancer control—a broad base of active partners, cancer data, identifying gaps in care and services, proven strategies, public education, training for health professionals, and integrated evaluation and feedback throughout the process. These pieces are coming together to change the colon cancer story in Kentucky."

The key building blocks that helped Kentucky make such progress include:

- A \$178,000 grant from CDC enabled 15 community coalitions in Kentucky to conduct the state's first coordinated statewide colon cancer awareness campaign in 2005–2006.
- A Dialogue for Action™: Get Behind Colon Cancer Screening for Kentuckians Summit held in Lexington, Kentucky in June 2008 to identify the state's top colon cancer priorities.
- Eleven Health Care Provider Trainings were held across the state from early 2008 to early 2009, giving more than 235 providers tools and resources to increase colon cancer screening in their practices.
- A Colon Cancer Screening Program for people with no insurance and/or no access to screening was established by the Kentucky State Legislature (funding pending). In a related move, the Legislature passed a bill requiring health insurance plans to cover colon cancer screening in July 2008.
- To increase coordination, the Kentucky Cancer Consortium Colon Cancer Ad Hoc Committee and the Kentucky Dialogue for Action™ Planning Committee merged into one entity, the KCC Colon Cancer Prevention Committee, in August 2008.
- Educational materials (a poster, bookmark, and church bulletin insert cards) about colon cancer were developed for distribution across the state.
- The Kentucky Department for Public Health introduced its new Colon Cancer Screening Program website in May 2009.
- Regional comprehensive cancer control coalitions distributed more than 5,900 colon cancer educational materials through targeted mailings, group presentations, and media to test dissemination methods.
- A Call to Action: Colon Cancer in Kentucky in May 2009 attracted 65 representatives from 37 organizations to learn about best practices for colon cancer education and outreach.
- The Targeted Colon Cancer Outreach Program (T-CCOP) was developed to fulfill the state requirement for a public awareness campaign. The 3-year program focuses on community and health care interventions and tracking results, media campaigns, direct mailings, printed awareness materials, continuing education for health care professionals, and evaluation.

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